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**Thirty-seven College Students Participate in
Regenerative Medicine Summer Research Program
Pittsburgh Tissue Engineering Initiative Marks 11th Year of Summer Internship**

PITTSBURGH, July 31, 2007 –Twenty-seven undergraduate students from colleges and universities primarily across southwestern Pennsylvania and the Pittsburgh region, are taking part in the 11th annual Summer Internship Program of the Pittsburgh Tissue Engineering Initiative (PTEI). With the goal to attract undergraduate students to the interdisciplinary field of TE and provide world-class training with leader researchers, PTEI developed and sponsors the annual Summer Undergraduate Internship Program (SIP). The SIP showcases growing opportunities in TE and biomedicine and provides 10-week, paid internships for undergraduate college students pursuing careers in medicine, engineering, biomedical research, bioengineering, and related fields. Each student is matched with an established researcher-mentor who supervises his or her work. The students perform their own research and data analysis, and present their findings at a formal scientific poster session held at the end of the program, on August 8th, 2007 at the Sheraton, Station Square.

Regional sponsors, including the Pittsburgh Foundation, Highmark Blue Cross and Blue Cross Blue Shield, and the Eden Hall Foundation focus on supporting the participation of undergraduate students with permanent homes in southwestern Pennsylvania. Community support in our efforts to ensure the availability of tomorrow's workforce across the region by exposing our own youth to the expanse of research, educational and workforce resources in their own backyard.

A special NSF-supported component focuses on supporting participation of under-represented minority students and students from primarily non-research academic institutes recruited from a national pool of applicants. This combined strategy enables to PTEI to both prevent brain drain and enable brain gain. An additional component pairs interns with researchers from the PTEI

National Tissue Engineering Center, wherein students focus on Department of Defense priority-area research as related to combat casualty care and wound healing. Sponsoring laboratories for all participants offer individualized projects for the interns, who present the results of their original research at a final scientific poster session.

PTEI interns gain valuable research experience working in laboratories of distinguished leader scientists, professional seminars and many other program enhancements, and make important contacts for advanced education and employment. To date, 198 students have participated in this program in the laboratories of PTEI-affiliated researchers. For the summer of 2007, 20-25 undergraduate students will participate. The outcomes from this program are enormously positive with 83% of those who have completed their undergraduate studies pursuing MD and or graduate level education with 12% currently employed in the life sciences industry sector. Nearly all cite the PTEI experience as pivotal and helping them determine next steps, appreciate the application of the scientific areas of study, and toward making critical contacts for their educational and career futures.

“The Summer Internship Program is PTEI’s oldest and most successful educational programs, and my favorite,” said LaShon Jackson, PTEI Educational Program Manager. “It provides the priceless opportunity for young people to explore careers as basic scientists and clinicians within the field of tissue engineering and the broader field of regenerative medicine, as well as work alongside of some of the fields most cutting edge researchers.”

Nineteen of the participating students are working in research centers in Pittsburgh, and another eight are working at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research (USAISR), Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. At the USAISR, interns interface with civilian/military biomedical research teams and engage in work focused on the development of new biomedical technologies and therapies for combat trauma and wound healing.

In addition to their research projects, students participate in many social activities, as well as educational seminars and special programs focused on issues that impact the field of tissue engineering and the larger field of biomedicine, including ethics programs, research symposia and professional skills development workshops. One of the program’s highlights is the formal poster presentation, at the conclusion of the 10 weeks, in which each student presents his or her work to an audience of researcher-mentors, peer participants, their family and friends.

PTEI is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health of individuals by establishing the region as an internationally recognized center of excellence in research, education, and commercial development for the advancement of tissue-related medical therapies. PTEI's educational programs span K-12 through postdoctoral training. For more information, visit the PTEI web site at www.ptei.org.

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